

the situation must be the result of prior physiological activity, identical in ~~earough~~ evolution which, however, is the only technique possible for the case; for example, if it is claimed the light movement is the result of ~~move~~development of biological faculties. The most likely alternative is that 'idea particles in the aqueous humour, everybody must have the same sized partiontrol' is an inherent quality or characteristic of the level of consciousness in exactly the same place at the same time, moving in the same direction at ~~involved~~, and since it did not arise biologically, the only conclusion must be that same speed, and this situation arises every time the experiment is carried ~~one~~ stratum of consciousness encompassing it, is itself not a physiological entity. The chances of such an occurrence arising fortuitously are remote in the extre~~r~~. The significance of the part played by the 'idea' hypothesis in the apparitional in fact, virtually impossible, and *these conditions apply to any theory based* theory has been fully covered by Tyrrell and does not arise here. However, taking *physiological function*. The inference is obvious.

What appears to be taking place, according to the 'idea' hypothesis, is that ~~consciousness~~, it is clearly possible that an 'idea' could arise from one or more first all the observers perceive the light as stationary. One observer claims 'psychical sources and thus provide a plausible theory for several other types of light is moving upwards' and each observer then has an 'idea' in ~~parapsychological phenomena~~. If the psychically inspired 'idea' is of a scene, it responsive observers will see the light doing so, as Gregory points out.

In the case of the solitary observer, whose sensory image of the light is ~~not~~ the Versailles type of experience recorded by Jourdain and Moberly.<sup>5</sup> If ~~the~~ primarily influenced by an 'idea' the image remains either stationary or moves~~s~~observer is of, say, a religious disposition, the 'idea' may well create a holy figure control the movement simply by 'willing' it (i.e., by convincing themselves ~~that~~ all these manifestations, and those aspects of perception already discussed, are in are able to do so), as with the anemometer effect described in an earlier issue~~t~~act simply different aspects of the one phenomenon, that is, an image arising in the Journal.<sup>2</sup> Control of movement is total and the light can be directed ~~the~~ consciousness on the inducement of an 'idea', for which in some cases there is whichever direction may be desired, or it can be rendered stationary. Apparently no physical basis. observer sees it follow his 'willed' direction because there is now an 'idea' in ~~the~~ It is probably useless to speculate on the nature of the 'idea-pattern' and its consciousness which is controlling the behaviour of the image. Most people ~~w~~associated stratum of consciousness, because if these are non-physical entities, as have no difficulty in confirming this phenomenon for themselves.

As has already been mentioned, experiments with autokinesis and voluntary movement indicate that the visual images being perceived arise simply from a belief (i.e., Tyrrell's 'idea-pattern') in the observer's consciousness and phenomena in which they appear to operate suggests that this situation already implanted by an external agent. There would appear to be little doubt but that the percepts from all three sources are created by the same mechanism, comprising Ashford, Kindlestown Hill hallucinatory images are indistinguishable, there would appear to be good grounds for including sensory perception. However, there is one serious objection in that sensory images are obviously not initiated basically by an 'idea' but by a brain state, and yet it can be shown that their behaviour may be controlled by nothing more than an 'idea'. This implies that the visual cortex cannot be an integral part of the image (contrary to a widely held opinion), nor can it create the image as some kind of physiological appendage. It seems merely to provide information from which the consciousness may, or may not, create a percept.

Normally, in the creation of a percept, consciousness always follows a pattern in the visual cortex, and it does so with meticulous exactitude, as otherwise life would clearly be impossible. Such an arrangement has undoubtedly come into existence, as Tyrrell points out in considerable detail, through biological necessity in the course of evolution. Nevertheless, the overriding control of such a reliable procedure by an insubstantial 'idea' is a phenomenon which indisputably exists, as can be demonstrated experimentally. How and why, then, has such an alien influence become part of the perceptual process? Certainly not

into account the possibly non-physical nature of the requisite stratum of consciousness, it is clearly possible that an 'idea' could arise from one or more psychical sources and thus provide a plausible theory for several other types of light which creates the image of the light moving upwards, and could explain the many accounts in the literature of people finding themselves in

totally inexplicable surroundings, and if these have historical associations, we are able to do so), as with the anemometer effect described in an earlier issue~~t~~act simply different aspects of the one phenomenon, that is, an image arising in the Journal.<sup>2</sup> Control of movement is total and the light can be directed ~~the~~ consciousness on the inducement of an 'idea', for which in some cases there is whichever direction may be desired, or it can be rendered stationary. Apparently no physical basis.

their behaviour would suggest, then the human intelligence, with its limitations, may be incapable of comprehending them. We might have no alternative but to from a belief (i.e., Tyrrell's 'idea-pattern') in the observer's consciousness and phenomena in which they appear to operate suggests that this situation already presents a serious challenge to the mind brain identity theory and lends credence to many of the claims of parapsychology.

Ashford, Kindlestown Hill  
Delgany, Co. Wicklow  
IRELAND

## PARAPSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGION: RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ITALY

by CARLOS S. ALVARADO

Discussion on the relationship of psi phenomena and religion is a topic that recurs in the literature of religion and parapsychology (for a review from the parapsychological point of view see Thouless, 1977). Some have argued that psychic phenomena are at the root of religious beliefs and experiences (Lang,

1894). Others argue that the phenomena provide evidence for a basic tenebchronisms are parapsychological phenomena consisting of ESP communication, that is, the existence of a nonphysical aspect of human beings (Rhijn between the visionaries' brains while in an altered state of consciousness. 1953). The latter reminds us that religious studies and parapsychology share, however, one wonders if such an explanation is necessary. The authors do not common interest in the concept of survival of bodily death.

Other writers have discussed psychic phenomena in relation to specroduction of the phenomenon. It is conceivable that after having had months or religions such as Judaism (Bazak, 1972) and Islam (Grunbaum, 1966), years of experience of trance behaviour the children have learned a routine of addition, there has been much attention paid to psychic phenomena in movements while in trance and have developed shared assumptions about the Christian context such as those reported to occur around Catholic mystics saints (Thurston, 1952), and phenomena such as Marian apparitions (Freixes, 1985). More recently, the topic of parapsychology and religion has been discussed in a conference of the Parapsychology Foundation (Shapin & Coopersmith, 1987) and is frequently considered in contemporary publications such as *Christian Parapsychologist* and the *Journal of Religion and Psychical Research*.

One of the most recent contributions to the subject in question appeared in the Italian journal *Quaderni di Parapsicologia* (1989, Vol. 20, whole issue). The journal is the proceedings of a 1988 conference held at Bologna to discuss different aspects of the relationship of religion and parapsychology. In this report I will briefly summarize and comment on the contents of the proceedings.

Father Andreas Resch presented an overview of ideas about psychich processes.

the Fathers of the Church such as Tertullian to the 18th century activities of Indian swami Sai Baba, who claims to be an Avatar. This included descriptions Prospero Lambertini, known as Pope Benedict XIV. According to Resch psychif phenomena such as materialization of objects and healings. However, in phenomena are of interest to the Church because they may foster worldviews. Rosati's opinion this is not the important aspect of Sai Baba's phenomena. He the members of the Church that are different from conventional doctrine, or thplaced more importance on the spiritual transformations that were reported to may manifest in ways consistent with Catholic beliefs (e.g., some cases occur to people around Baba. The proceedings also include a short paper about apparitions and healing). Parapsychology, says Resch, may be useful in terms of Baba's doctrine and interpersonal relationships by Angelo Chiari. Readers studying the authenticity and causes of miraculous claims. This is a point thinterested in more in depth information about Sai Baba should consult has been made before by other students of the subject when, for example, Haraldsson's (1987) recent book on the subject.

In one of the most interesting papers of the conference Giorgio Gagliardi argued that the idea of different levels of reality is clearly seen in Marco Margnelli summarized psychophysiological researches conducted with five children that claim to have had visions of the Virgin Mary since 1981.<sup>a</sup> In contrast to the above mentioned papers Alfonso di Nola rejected the Medjugorje, Yugoslavia. One of the phenomena the children show is that existence of a transcendental world. Instead he postulated an objective and a 'synchronisms' or movements or gestures done at the same time by all children subjective reality. He suggested that all paranormal occurrences (including so during ecstasy. The children have been subjected to a variety of tests which called magical and miraculous events) may be explained by human psi faculties. include visual and auditory evoked potential, galvanic skin response, heart and respiration rate measures. In the author's views the research has demonstrated basis of prejudice, as well as those that use the paranormal to justify religious sensorially isolated from the environment, [and] the synchronisms do not seem to be caused by signals from the environment . . . Some of the studies of synchronisms focused on eye movements. Two children showed similar eye movements when they were seeing the apparition of Mary. Analyses of films showed that their eye movements coincided with each other within a variation of 200 to 500 milliseconds. Gagliardi and Margnelli interpret this to mean that indicated the existence of a spiritual realm. In his opinion some phenomena

<sup>a</sup> See note 1.

Sergio Bernardi argued that

that the idea of different levels of reality is clearly seen in Eastern religions and philosophies. Psychic phenomena was seen as a natural part of systems such as yoga.

In the above mentioned papers Alfonso di Nola rejected the 'synchronisms' or movements or gestures done at the same time by all children subjective reality. He suggested that all paranormal occurrences (including so during ecstasy. The children have been subjected to a variety of tests which called magical and miraculous events) may be explained by human psi faculties. include visual and auditory evoked potential, galvanic skin response, heart and respiration rate measures. In the author's views the research has demonstrated basis of prejudice, as well as those that use the paranormal to justify religious sensorially isolated from the environment, [and] the synchronisms do not seem to be caused by signals from the environment . . . Some of the studies of synchronisms focused on eye movements. Two children showed similar eye movements when they were seeing the apparition of Mary. Analyses of films showed that their eye movements coincided with each other within a variation of 200 to 500 milliseconds. Gagliardi and Margnelli interpret this to mean that indicated the existence of a spiritual realm. In his opinion some phenomena

suggest: (1) other levels of reality (NDEs); (2) survival of death (ND mediumship); (3) independence of the physical body (OBEs, ESP, PK); and (4) analogies with miracles (PK, materializations, apports, healing). He argues, 'After Bersani's comments participants and observers discussed further related to the topic of the conference. For lack of space I will mention only two: these comments. Resch recognized the practical difficulties that the Church faced in demonstrating divine intervention when trying to explain miracles. Liverziani commented on the differences between mediumistic and saintly levitations, as seen in D. D. Home and Joseph Copertino. In his view Home produced levitations through the use of psychic energy, while Copertino (1928) attempts to establish different causal processes of psychic phenomena interesting but unconvincing because no clear criteria are offered to sustain such ideas. Even if we admit differences of magnitude in the phenomena explanation may be one of different social or psychological contexts. For example, a religious setting may provide a psychological set (e.g., no sense of personal responsibility in producing the phenomena) in which levitations at other phenomena manifest in a stronger way than in other contexts. Such conditions may be more psi-conducive than mediumistic seances or other contexts of psi-functioning. The point is that we have to consider other possibilities before committing ourselves to explanations having little evident support.'

The contributors to this conference mention issues that have been repeatedly discussed in the literature on the subject. Some show interest in anomalous phenomena reported to occur around particular individuals in a religious context. Others focus on how parapsychology shows the existence of nonphysical reality, a basic tenet of all religions. Still others argue for the practical use of parapsychology in distinguishing between human and supernatural causal processes or in the authentication of miracles. But is the body size: for a given hit probability and hit rate, effect size is constant for large numbers of trials. Or perhaps Berger's point is that the effect sizes for the same subsets are too close to those of the original sets? We have: Berger expresses surprise that the effect sizes of randomly removed subsets are virtually identical to the effect sizes of the original sets (Table 1). Yet surely this would be expected by virtue of the definition of effect size: for a given hit probability and hit rate, effect size is constant for large numbers of trials. Or perhaps Berger's point is that the effect sizes for the same subsets are too close to those of the original sets? We have:

	Observed hits, 1,500-trial sets	Expected hits, 500-trial subsets	Expected hits, 1,000-trial paired sets	Observed hits, 500-trial subsets
Deviations	672 ±3	528 ±9	386 ±17	128.667 ±12.5
Chi-square	0.0603	0.6903	0.1568	257.333

I should like to offer some comments on Rick Berger's 'Note', in the October 1989 *Journal*, entitled 'A Critical Examination of the Spinelli Dissertation Data'. Table and page numbers refer to that article and to Ernesto Spinelli's reply in the same *Journal*.

## REFERENCES

- Benzinger. (First published in French, 1920.)  
 Bersani, S. (1985). *Les Apparitions de l'Exorciste*. Madrid: Quinta.  
 Berger, R. H. (1977). 'Implications for religious studies.' In S. Krippner (Ed.), *Advances in Parapsychological Research: I. Psychokinesis*. New York: Plenum Press, 175-190.  
 Berger, R. H. (1977). 'Parapsychology, Philosophy and Religious Concepts'. New York: William Sloane.  
 Flinthe, J. B. (1953). *New World of the Mind*. New York: William Sloane.  
 Frans, A. (1894). *Cock Lane and Common-Sense*. London: Longmans, Green.  
 Frarey, O. (1928). *Levitation*. London: Burns Oates & Washbourne.  
 Gargiulo, J. B. (1972). *Judaism and Psychic Phenomena*. New York: Garrett.  
 Garde, E. (1987). 'Miracles are My Visiting Cards.' London: Century.  
 Liverziani, B., & Coly, L. (Eds.). (1987). *Parapsychology, Philosophy and Religious Concepts*. New York: Parapsychology Foundation.  
 Liverziani, B., & Coly, L. (Eds.). (1987). *Parapsychology, Philosophy and Religious Concepts*. New York: Parapsychology Foundation.